

Domino's owner: Business acted appropriately' in firing deaf teen

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By Jennifer Lawson, jlawson@21st-centurymedia.com

LANSDALE In a statement released Monday, the owner of the Dominos Pizza on Main Street in the borough said he was unable to comment on a 17-year-old Hatfield boys claim that he was fired because of his deafness, but he said that once all of the facts are presented, everyone will be convinced that my company and I have acted appropriately and fully within the law.

Brian Rozinski, who said he has operated that Dominos location since 1992, stated that the pending litigation prevented him from saying anything further about Kyle Riess.

However, Kyles mother Barrie said that a lawsuit has not been filed and she has not retained a lawyer.

There is no pending litigation. I dont know what hes talking about, she said.

Barrie Riess said they are weighing their options, and wouldnt rule out litigation in the future. She has filed a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, and the administrative complaint process with that agency must be completed before a suit can be filed a process that can take months.

Kyle was born partially deaf in both ears and wears hearing aids. He also has cerebral palsy. Hes had other part-time jobs and has not had any issues. Hes also a junior volunteer firefighter with the Hatfield Fire Company, according to Kyle and his mother.

At Dominos, his responsibilities included making pizzas, taking orders over the phone and folding boxes, among other duties. His pay was \$7.50 per hour. After working for three weeks on a part-time basis, Kyle said his manager fired him Nov. 22 because he had trouble hearing someone on the phone a few days earlier.

When he went home and told his mother that he had been terminated and why, she called the manager. According to Riess, the manager said, Its my fault because I didnt notice the hearing aids when I hired him, she said.

The manager also told Riess that he would not have hired her son if he knew he was deaf.

Individuals with hearing impairments and other disabilities are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires employers to make reasonable accommodations for such employees.

Rozinskis statement says that we at Dominos proudly support diversity in the workplace and society in general and are happy to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and that his store has not only hired and retained people with disabilities for many years but we also fully support the organizations that help disabled people.

His Dominos location has made many donations in the past to organizations such as The Blind Association, Easter Seals and the Variety Club, among others, the statement says, and has worked with Team Works, a program that helps provide real life job experience to teenagers with various disabilities.

Over the years hes employed hundreds of people, Rozinskis statement says, and has never been accused of improper employment and hiring practices.

He also pointed out that as an independent franchisee, my company follows not only federal, state and local hiring employment regulations, but also Dominos own stringent hiring and employment regulations.

Rozinskis statement says that he has experience in helping those with disabilities, as my own sister has been deaf in one ear and has reduced hearing capacity in her other ear since childhood. I realize the many challenges that life places before people with disabilities and I do my best to look for ways to help people out.

According to North Wales employment lawyer Ayesha Hamilton, shelling out money to file a lawsuit might not be prudent

because Kyle Riess was earning just over minimum wage, which is \$7.25 per hour, and the damages he could be entitled to would be limited.

Kyle Riess is still searching for a part-time job, Barrie Riess said, but so far, he hasn't had any luck.

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